

Philosopher and Apostle

"Philosopher's Corner" is a column conducted by R. Farthing in a Peterboro (Canada) newspaper. The columnist sends to Miss Margaret Bateman, assistant director of the Henry George School of Social Science, an installment in which he quotes extensively from George's "Ode to Liberty." Mr. Farthing accompanies this clipping with a letter in which the usual questions as to the completeness of George's teachings are raised.

Paul Peach, of the Freeman staff, has replied to this letter. This reply is printed here because it reiterates effectively the policy and purpose of the Henry George School. The familiar doubts which Mr. Farthing's letter mentioned can be inferred from Mr. Peach's reply; the general point of view of Mr. Farthing himself is indicated in this sentence from his letter: "So far as economics goes, 'Looking Backward' and 'Equality' are my bibles, and Bellamy is my prophet."

* * *

Dear Mr. Farthing: Do you mind if I answer your letter to Miss Bateman? You and I seem to have a good deal in common, and I feel almost like my apostolic namesake who, in addressing the Athenians, pointed to the altar of the "unknown god" and said in effect, "That's my boss."

"The natural resources are given to political heelers, and the people robbed of their heritage." That fact was the basis of Henry George's agitation for reform.

"The one original sin is the sin of ignorance." This is the dragon which the modern George, through the School, strives against.

"If men knew, inevitably there would be a change." This is the hope of the School.

"They are not taught, because their teachers do not know." This is the condition which the School hopes to remedy.

"They are not encouraged even to think for themselves, for thinking men and women are potentially dan-

gerous." It is this strong purge which we must administer to society, and there is none to administer it but us.

I know "Looking Backward" well. Until 1937 I, too, was a follower of Bellamy; yet I deplored what I felt was the inevitable destiny of such a community—subservience to a political bureaucracy. I fought strongly against George with the words "oversimplification" and "preoccupation with a single (and minor) detail." Today I am assistant editor of the School's paper, and teach classes here in logic and mathematical statistics. Better still, I am slowly but surely earning the disesteem of a large and influential number of Georgists all over the world.

For to me economic laws can never be viewed against the narrow background of a tax on land value. I look to George as modern students of physics look to Faraday—as to a great initiator, a trail blazer, an intellectual pioneer. I was trained originally as a chemist, and have transferred to economics my old attitude toward chemistry—not as something established, like a mountain, but rather as something growing, like a tree. I think of economics as a science, like chemistry; and of George as one who opened the door of that science, for students like me to follow. Accordingly, if a thing is good science, it is Georgist in my view, whether George said it or not—and indeed, even though he may have said quite the reverse.

Non-Georgist economics is moribund—except for Marxism, which is constantly becoming more and more involved in its own contradictions. In a few scattered schools and colleges not identified with the Georgist movement occasional free spirits grope toward a scientific economics. I hope that the Henry George School may yet acquire such a name, and

such dignity and reputation, that eventually all such students will turn to it as the institution through which their work must be integrated. The idea is not a vain dream; we are, I think, closer to the goal than we were a year ago, and making progress. It is not easy, for efforts to convert the School's graduates into a political pressure group are unceasing and must be fought constantly.

You think Franklin exaggerated when he said that two generations of Christians would make the world a paradise? I don't. But unintelligent Christianity is (in my opinion) mere savagery and superstition, and so I exclude such Christianity. Could two generations of intelligent Christians make the world a paradise? I should say rather that two weeks ought to be enough. But it would mean getting rid of most of our professional Christians and holy men, and most of our professional wise men too. That's chimerical, of course.

All we can do is teach and study. George said, "Where there is right thought, right action will follow." This is our faith and our hope.

Paul Peach, New York.

.....

The Freeman

A Monthly Critical Journal of Social and Economic Affairs

Editor: FRANK CHODOROV
 Assistant Editor: PAUL PEACH
 Associate Editors

C. O. Steele John Lawrence Monroe
 Harry Gunnison Brown Laura Brest
 Hubbell McBride Ami Mali Hicks
 John Frew Sylva Wiren
 George Bringmann

* * *

Cuts for our illustrations are by Horan Engraving Co., Inc.

* * *

The Freeman does not necessarily endorse opinions expressed in signed or initialed contributions or statements in news reports, assuring the widest freedom of expression to its writers. Contributions consistent with the policy of The Freeman are welcomed; no payment is made, for the writers contribute their services as a living endowment to the cause for which The Freeman stands.

